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## LETT'S HEPATICS OF THE BRITISH ISLANDS.\*

MARSHALL A. HOWE.

\*H. W. Lett. A list, with descriptive notes, of all the Hepaticae hitherto found in the British Islands. Published by the author, Aghaderg, Glebe, Loughbrickland; Co. Down. 1902. Pp. 1—VIII-1-90. Price, 7s., 6d.

This work, which is a descriptive manual rather than a "list," is an attempt to popularize the study of the Hepaticae of Great Britain and Ireland. The language of the work, as the author states in the preface, "is not that usually found in botanical books, and which needs the assistance of a dictionary of Botanical terms or a vocabulary, but plain simple English." The author's purpose to employ simple language is rather well carried out, though certain terms like "monoicous," "dioicous," and a few others that occur in nearly every description are probably as susceptible to impeachment in the *role* of "plain simple English" as would be several other telling technical terms that are studiously avoided. The use of the metric system for measurements, which deserves speedily to become "plain English," even though not generally considered so at present, is to be commended.

In general plan and typography, the book suggests Dixon and Jameson's popular Handbook of British Mosses, and like that, it is a work that will prove of service to the American as well as to the British beginner in the study of bryophytes. But unhappily for the less experienced student, for whom the work is primarily intended, there are frequent errors or inaccuracies of statement which may mislead rather than help. Some of those have been listed by Mr. Symers M. Macvicar in a review, published in the *Journal of Botany* for December, 1902. Among those not noted by Mr. Macvicar may be mentioned the following remark under *Anthoceros punctatus*: "When without fruit they might be taken for young states of *Pellia*, but may be distinguished with aid of a lens by the absence of true stomata-pores in their surface and by the large cells." As a matter of fact, the existence of "true stomata-pores" or pores of any other kind in *Pellia* has, so far as we know, never before been hinted at by any one, while in the epidermis of the Anthocerotaceae there are actually inconspicuous clefts (especially on the ventral surface) which authors have described as "stomata" or "mucilage-slits." A very important and easily applied test which always serves to distinguish a sterile *Anthoceros* from a *Pellia* or any other hepatic in the narrower sense, is of course the presence of a *single* large chlorophyll body in each epidermal cell, while in *Pellia* each surface cell contains *several or many* very much smaller chlorophyll-bodies. A further remark of Canon Lett's, under *Anthoceros Stableri*, is that "The species of *Anthoceros*, if dried, are almost impossible to distinguish from each other." We cannot say how it may be with *A. Stableri*, but we have found in practice that *Anthoceros punctatus* and *A. laevis*, the other two species of his list, are best distinguished by decided differences in the nature of the surface-markings of the spores and by their color, characters that can be determined as well from dried material as from the living.

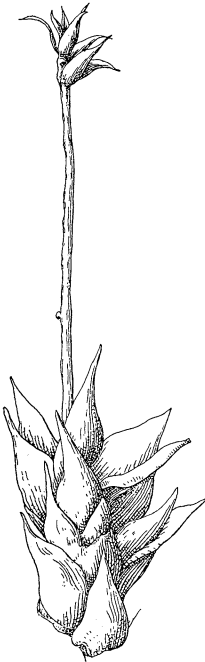
The arrangement of the genera in some parts of the book evidently fol-

lows natural relationships, but the sandwiching in of *Anthoceros* between *Sphaerocarpus* and *Marchantia* is even more violent and unnatural than was the now long obsolete placing of the Gymnosperms between the Monocotyledons and the Dicotyledons. The nomenclature of the work is, in general, that which is most familiar to English-speaking students of the Hepaticae, but in supporting the efforts of some continental writers to revive Dumortier's *Madotheca* in place of the Linnaean *Porella*, the author is departing not only from the English, American, and Scandinavian usage of many years' standing, but also, we believe, from the usage which must eventually prevail elsewhere. The book contains descriptions of several species, the discovery of which in the British Isles was too late for their inclusion in Pearson's admirable monograph. The work, as a whole, in spite of some patent defects, we think will prove useful to the less technically inclined students of the Hepaticae both in the British Isles and in North America.

New York Botanical Garden.

**PAPILLARIA NIGRESCENS (Sw.) JAEGL. & SAUERB.  
*Meteorium Nigrescens* Mitt.**

ELIZABETH G. BRITTON.



The type of this species was collected and described by Swartz from high mountains in Jamaica and was figured by both Hedwig and Schwaegrichen in the *Species Muscorum*. Various specimens from Mexico, the West Indies, Venezuela, Florida, and Louisiana have been also called by the same name. Since my note on "West Indian Mosses in Florida" was published (*BRYOLOGIST*, 6:4, 1903) it has become evident that the description of this species in the *Manual* is incomplete and misleading and that *Leptodon trichomitrium* has been and is liable to be mistaken for it. In fact the leaves are very much alike in shape and size, but the cells are different and those of *Meteorium* are papillose on both sides with three or four minute papillæ on each cell. Add to this the fact that the description of the fruit in the *Manual* is taken from Schwaegrichen's plate, as there are no fruiting specimens of this species in any herbarium that we have examined, and that all the species of this genus very rarely fruit, most of them being known only from sterile specimens, and we have an added reason for doubting the correctness of referring specimens from Lake Huron to this species. It seems likely that the hairy calyptra in *Leptodon trichomitrium*, has been the misleading character for confusing it with

the description in the *Manual*.